



Seafarers Ministry of the Golden Gate

Continuing the Ministry of the Scandinavian Seamen's Mission

534 22nd Street
Oakland, CA 94612-1614

Phone 510-893-3104

Fax 510-893-3106

Dr. Jim Lindgren, Chaplain/Director

February 5, 2003

To Coast Guard Hearing - *USCG-2002-14069-42*
RE: Transportation Security Act - Maritime Security
Los Angeles - Long Beach

I have come here representing the chaplains and seafarers agencies in the San Francisco Bay Area. We, like all Americans, are concerned about Port Security and Homeland Security. We want to do our part in making our ports safe. We feel that we play an important part in this effort. We visit with American and foreign seafarers, they come to our centers and look for us for guidance on many matters. When there is tightened security and tensions in the port, they look to us for assurance and answers. We are the closest link with the seafarers as their trusted friends and confidants. We help keep them in touch with their families and are the source of information and links to authorities and other entities. Often when there is a need, and they don't know where to turn, we are the source of information. We are that source if we are kept abreast what is happening.

After 9-11, we met many fearful seafarers who understand that they too could be the victims of terrorism. They are our allies and want to remain our allies. However, often they seem to be singled out security risks. Often this is done in a random fashion, creating confusion and suspicion.

We are also frequent visitors to the docks in our port. We see what is happening and are well aware of the haphazard kinds of security that is in our ports. Yet, on some docks, we are also treated with suspicion and are not allowed entry. We are not the problem, but welcome being part of the solution.

One of the areas of concern for us is port identification. We travel to many docks involving many port authorities as well as private docks. Even within the docks covered by a single port authority, docks are run by different terminal operators. Every dock has different security requirements. Some want us to have permission of the agent. When we talk to the agent, they say entry is up to the terminal operator. What is frustrating is that it seems easier for chandlers peddling merchandise to seafarers to get into a dock than it is for us.

International conventions guarantee the right of seafarers to have access to seafarers' social welfare agencies, either by shore leave or by allowing seafarers' welfare agencies to board the ships.

We feel that these two issues have to be addressed: shore leave and access to the ships.

First, shore leave: Seafarers for their own well being and the safety of the ship, need shore leave on a regular basis. While there may be a need to deny shore leave, this should only be done in extreme cases and for good reason.

Second, access to seafarers: It is important for chaplains and trained ship visitors have access to the ships and seafarers. We are not a threat to security by being at terminals. Indeed, knowing the routine of terminals, we are another set of eyes and ears who may see unusual activity. (If you want to know about lax security in ports, talk to the chaplains!) When we are on board ships, we can make seafarers aware of safe places to go for recreation and relaxation. And for those who are legitimately denied shore leave, we can be a genuine friend and help dispel misunderstandings and relieve tensions on board.

As chaplains and seafarers agencies, we should not be relegated to the sidelines of the port community, but should be included as relevant and important players in the matters of port security.

On behalf of the seafarers' agencies in San Francisco Bay Area, I thank you.

Sincerely,



Jim Lindgren
Chaplain/Director